

# Espionage agencies go to great lengths to protect agents

## Soviets' hard line on Daniloff intended to reassure their spies

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There is a silent audience scattered throughout the United States intently watching every turn in the current negotiations between the US and the Soviet Union over Nicholas Daniloff and Gennady Zakharov.

They are the hundreds of Soviet citizens the Federal Bureau of Investigation estimates are currently working undercover in the US for the Soviet intelligence service, the KGB. Each one of them has a vested interest in the outcome of the superpower test of wills.

According to some analysts, the Soviets' hard line in calling for the total release of Mr. Zakharov, a United Nations employee who was arrested in New York last month on espionage charges, is sending a reassuring message to dedicated KGB agents stationed in the US.

Zakharov's arrest and the subsequent jailing in Moscow of Mr. Daniloff, an American journalist, have sparked a debate over how best to handle the future arrest and prosecution of alleged Soviet spies in the US.

Some observers wonder whether talk of a negotiated

settlement of the standoff undermines the deterrent effect of tough US espionage laws on KGB agents here.

But other experts counter that in the real world of intelligence gathering, negotiated swaps are a necessary option in dealing with the Soviets.

"This is a tough world and a tough business," says Richard Helms, former director of the Central Intelligence

Agency. "I think that US counterintelligence has to nail these people and arrest them whenever they can make a case against them."

But Mr. Helms stresses that the US government must reserve the option of negotiating with the Soviet Union whenever necessary in the interest of achieving results. The alternative, he says, is for individuals such as Daniloff to have to endure lengthy prison sentences in the Soviet Union, and for relatively minor episodes to escalate into major confrontations.

"If we establish a policy of no exchanges of spies in the US, we would have to accept that the same number of people [Westerners accused of spying] in Eastern Europe when caught would be sentenced to long prison terms and would spend the time in East European prisons," says Ladislav Bittman, a defector from Czechoslovakia who is now an author and university professor.

Professor Bittman notes that the Soviets perceived the arrest of Zakharov as a provocation — a form of entrapment by US officials. Likewise, the American government has said that Daniloff was set up by the Soviets on manufactured spy charges.

"We have to negotiate some kind of resolution, some kind of exchange," Bittman says.

There are roughly 1,000 Soviet diplomats, officials, UN employees, business people, students, and others in the US, and another 3,000 from the other East-bloc countries combined. It is estimated that one-quarter of these people are involved in intelligence activities.

In addition, 7,000 Soviet and East-bloc tourists visited the US last year.

Despite a string of spy arrests in 1984 and '85, the majority of the Soviet personnel involved in the most recent espionage rings have enjoyed diplomatic immunity and were quickly ushered out of the US by Soviet authorities. The few Soviet and East-bloc agents who have been convicted and sentenced to prison in the West have traditionally been traded in well-publicized spy swaps usually carried out at the Glienicke Bridge between East and West Berlin.

**'In any [spy] organization, you want high morale and your people to take chances.'**

— Richard Helms